

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 000551

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARPI, S/CT, DS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/13/2015

TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [BA](#)

SUBJECT: KING EMPHASIZES NEED FOR COUNTER-TERRORISM LAW

REF: 04 MANAMA 1643

Classified By: DCM Susan L. Ziadeh for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (SBU) The press reported that the King met with parliamentary leaders April 13 to emphasize that a counter-terrorism law is necessary to protect Bahrain given the growing number of attacks throughout the region and the world. King Hamad told the parliamentarians that they had "a responsibility before God" to protect Bahrainis and foreigners living in the Kingdom from harm. He stressed that the draft counter-terrorism law which the Cabinet recently submitted to parliament (reftel) would not erode constitutional freedoms or represent a step backwards in Bahrain's democratic reforms. King Hamad told the parliamentarians that they were free to amend the draft law, as the legislative branch had the right to do so.

2. (C) A wide range of parliamentarians, journalists, and members of civil society have publicly and privately voiced concern about the draft law. While there is widespread recognition that Bahrain should implement counter-terrorism legislation, many question whether the draft law defines terrorism too broadly and gives too much authority to security agencies. Some have compared the draft law to the old State Security Law under which many people were imprisoned and tortured in the 1990s.

3. (C) Separately, Minister of Finance Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohamed Al Khalifa told visiting Treasury Deputy Assistant Secretary for Terrorism Financing and Financial Crime Daniel

SIPDIS

Glaser April 13 that the Cabinet's Legal Committee had just cleared and passed to the Cabinet proposed amendments to the existing anti-money laundering law that would extend the provisions and penalties for money laundering to terrorism financing. He anticipated that the Cabinet would act promptly to move the legislation to the parliament, and that the government would assign the highest priority to gaining rapid passage. He indicated that, unlike the broader counter-terrorism legislation, the terrorism financing amendments were not controversial and should proceed through the National Assembly quickly and smoothly.

4. (C) Comment: The King chose to consult with parliamentary leaders just one day after returning to Bahrain from a two-week absence, signaling the importance of getting the CT law passed. Complaints that the legislation defines terrorism too broadly may lead to an iterative process of amending the draft law. The GOB is now grappling with how to formulate a law that straddles the need to punish terrorists and those planning terrorist acts, while protecting civil liberties in a country newly embarked on its reform path.

MONROE